

Commander Richard J. Schmaeling, United States Navy

Commander Schmaeling hails from Wantagh, NY. He is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy, earning his Bachelor of Science Degree in History in 1999. He was commissioned in May of 1999 upon graduation.

After earning his wings of gold in April 2001, Commander Schmaeling reported to Helicopter Combat Support Squadron ELEVEN (HC-11) in San Diego, California for his first squadron tour flying the H-46 *Sea Knight*. While a member of the *Gunbearers*, Commander Schmaeling was deployed once to the Western Pacific and Arabian Gulf flying missions in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM onboard the USS TARAWA (LHA-1) and USS BONHOMME RICHARD (LHD-6). While at HC-11, he served as the Assistant NATOPS Officer, Detachment NATOPS Officer, Detachment Division Officer, Legal Officer, and Lead Scheduling Officer.

Commander Schmaeling transitioned back to his roots flying the TH-57 *Jet Ranger* as a helicopter flight instructor pilot in Pensacola, FL. While at Helicopter Training Squadron EIGHTEEN (HT-18), he instructed basic and radio instruments, familiarizations flights, and was one of the first Navy NVD TH-57 flight instructors. He served as Simulator Scheduling Officer, Flight One Lead Officer, Standardization Pilot and Maintenance Officer.

In July 2007, Commander Schmaeling reported aboard USS NIMITZ (CVN-68) as a Tactical Action Officer and Combat Direction Center Division Officer. USS NIMITZ deployed as part of Carrier Strike Group ELEVEN in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. He later went on to serve as the Assistant Operations Officer and completed his tour as the Assistant Navigation Officer. During this tour, he also qualified as an Officer of the Deck (Underway) and Command Duty Officer (Underway).

In July 2009, CDR Schmaeling was ordered to the *Eightballers* of HSC-8. He served as the squadron's Administration Officer, Maintenance Officer and Officer in Charge of the USS BRIDGE's logistics detachment while deployed with Carrier Airwing NINE (CVW-9) onboard USS JOHN C STENNIS (CVN-74) for two Fifth Fleet deployments in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Following his time with HSC-8, Commander Schmaeling reported to HSC-3, the *Mighty Merlins*. In addition to flight instructor duties, he has served as the squadron's operations officer and is currently the Search and Rescue Model Manager Assistant for Plans and Policy.

Commander Schmaeling has been awarded the Navy Commendation Medal three times, the Navy Achievement Medal twice, and various service ribbons. He has completed a Masters of Arts in National Security and Strategic Defense and Phase One Joint Professional Military Education at the Naval War College, Newport, RI. He is married to the former Nicole Pedrotty of Coronado, CA and has three children, Caleb, Nathan, and Eliana.